

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-25 ISO-00 SAB-01 SAJ-01 OMB-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10

PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 SAM-01 NIC-01

ACDA-19 IO-14 DRC-01 /164 W
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R 221301Z FEB 74

FM USINT CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5430

INFO USINT ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 871

BEIRUT FOR BAGHDAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR EG LY

SUBJECT: LIBYAN/EGYPTIAN RAPPROCHEMENT

REF: CAIRO 802

1. ALI AMIN'S FRIDAY NEWS COLUMN IN FEBRUARY 22 AHARAM STATES,
WITHOUT FURTHER EXPLANATION, THAT UNITY TALKS BETWEEN EGYPT
AND LIBYA ARE EXPECTED TO BE RESUMED NEXT MONTH IN CAIRO, WITH
THE ATTENDANCE OF SADAT AND QADHAAFI.

2. THIS LATEST DEVELOPMENT IN LIBYAN/EGYPTIAN DRAMA FOLLOWS
FOUR DAYS OF DAYS OF HIGHLY VISIBLE PRESS AND RADIO COVERAGE GIVEN TO
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QADHAAFI'S VISIT TO EGYPT, HIS PRESENCE AT CELEBRATION

HONORING HEROES OF OCTOBER WAR, AND DEPARTURE WITH SADAT FOR SAUDI ARABIA. HIGH POINT WAS REACHED DURING QADHAAFI'S SPEECH BEFORE EGYPTIAN ASSEMBLY ON OCTOBER 18 WHEN HE PRAISED EGYPT FOR HAVING SHOULDERED BURDENS OF WAR, DECRIED THOUGHTS OF RIFT BETWEEN EGYPT AND LIBYA, AND CALLED FOR ARAB SUPPORT FOR EGYPTIAN RECONSTRUCTION. (QADHAAFI HAD INVITED HIMSELF TO PA MEETING AND SADAT HAD REFUSED TO MEET HIM AT CAIRO AIRPORT. INSTEAD VP SHAFEI AND, IN WHAT MUST HAVE BEEN A BIT OF A BLOW TO THAT ISLAMIC DEVOTEE OF KEEPING WOMEN IN THEIR PLACE, MADAME SADAT WERE SENT TO GREET HIM ON ARRIVAL.)

3. EGYPTIAN AND OTHER OBSERVERS IN CAIRO HAVE GENERALLY TAKEN QADHAAFI'S REMARKS TO MEAN THAT HE HAS TEMPORARILY BURIED HIS DIFFERENCES WITH SADAT OVER CONDUCT OF PEACE, AND HAS DECIDED TO STOP DIRECT AND INDIRECT HARASSMENT OF EGYPT WHICH HAS CONTINUED SINCE END OF OCTOBER. IF REPORTED CORRECTLY, LATEST DECISION TO CONTINUE TALKS ON UNITY (SUSPENDED FOR ALMOST SIX MONTHS) SUGGESTS THAT RAPPROCHEMENT WILL DEEPEN.

4. IT IS DIFFICULT NOT TO BE SKEPTICAL OF THIS ENTIRE BUSINESS. THUS FAR, WE HAVE SEEN NO INDICATION THAT SADAT OR QADHAAFI HAVE IN ANY WAY MODIFIED THEIR ESSENTIAL (AND DIFFERING) POSITIONS TOWARDS THE QUESTIONS OF WAR, PEACE, THE CONDUCT AND MEANING OF ARAB UNITY, OR EVEN TOWARD EACH OTHER. WHAT APPEARS TO BE OCCURRING IS AN ARRANGEMENT OF CONVENIENCE WHICH ON ONE HAND SIGNIFICANTLY WEAKENS WHAT THE FRENCH NOW CALL THE "FRONT DE REFUS" OF ARAB STATES AND ORGANIZATIONS ALIGNED AGAINST SETTLEMENT TALKS WITH ISRAEL WHILE, POSSIBLY, PROVIDING QADHAAFI WITH ANOTHER CHANCE AT UNITY AND REDUCING HIS EXPOSURE TO POLITICAL RETRIBUTION FROM EGYPT SHOULD THERE BE A CONFRONTATION. STILL, SOMEHOW, THIS DOES NOT QUITE ADD UP: FOR WHILE THE ADVANTAGES TO SADAT OF A RECONCILIATION WITH QADHAAFI ARE FAIRLY CLEAR, QADHAAFI'S GAINS ARE NOT SO OBVIOUS. IT MAY BE THAT THE RECENT CASE OF MIMI SHAKIB, THE LEADER OF A CALL-GIRL RING WHO REPORTEDLY IMPLICATED JALLUD (AMONG OTHERS) IN THE FEMALE ENTERTAINMENT BUSINESS, HAS BROUGHT HOME TO QADHAAFI THAT THERE ARE SOME DANGERS INVOLVED IN CROSSING SADAT FOR TOO LONG A PERIOD. THIS, HOWEVER, IS PREDICATED ON THE BELIEF THAT THE SHAKIB AFFAIR WAS ARRANGED FOR QADHAAFI'S BENEFIT, WHICH WE ARE NOT INCLINED TO CREDIT

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TOO HIGHLY BECAUSE IT REPORTEDLY IMPLICATED HIGH EGYPTIAN FIGURES AS WELL AS HIS PRIME MINISTER.

5. IN SUM, WE SEE A COSMETIC IMPROVEMENT OF THE EGYPTIAN/LIBYAN RELATIONSHIP, BUT LITTLE TO INDICATE THAT THIS IMPROVEMENT CAN LAST FOR VERY LONG UNLESS THERE HAVE BEEN BASIC CHANGES IN ATTITUDE ON THE PART OF SADAT AND QADHAAFI WHICH ARE NOT NOW APPARENT.

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